



ROBERT J. CLEMENTS
Chairman

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

BOARD OF FINANCE

BOARD OF FINANCE REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2009

RICHARD J. CLEARY
MARK A. JOYSE
BARRY C. PINTO
MICHAEL D. VARNEY
JOSEPH E. WEHR

Members Present: R. Clements-Chmn, R. Cleary, M. Joyse, B. Pinto, M. Varney, J. Wehr

Others Present: N. DiCorleto-Finance Officer, M. Stupinski-First Selectmen, P. Charter-Selectman, S. Cullinan-Supt of Schools, A. Littizzio-Dir Bus Svs BOE, C. Pippin-Chief CLFD, members of the Crystal Lake Fire Dept, members of the Board of Education, Rich Gelsomino-Football Boosters, Tim McCluskey-EHS Athletic Director, Residents, Journal Inquirer Reporter.

Call to Order

Chairman Robert Clements called the meeting of the Board of Finance to order at 8:02 PM.

Citizens Forum (non-agenda items) -- None

Approval of Minutes

MOVED (JOYSE) SECONDED (PINTO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF AUGUST 18, 2009 AS WRITTEN.

MOVED (JOYSE) SECONDED (CLEARY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF AUGUST 31, 2009 AS WRITTEN.

Financial Statements

The Finance Officer reviewed the notes to the financial statements with the Board. There were unexpected payments received from CRRA for recycling rebates and Pilot payment. Tax collections are at 53.5% which is close to last year at this time. State Revenues increased \$16,286 over budget for General Government. Department Revenues are not doing too badly with the exception of Investment Income. The major variances to the budget execution are due to timing differences. The variance in building demolition is due to the demolition of the Miner Property on South Rd. The Finance Officer told the Board that he is still working on the undesignated fund balance and has a few outstanding invoices before closing out the year. He feels that there is not a problem making the budget. Mr. Joyse asked what the undesignated fund balance had been budgeted at and he was told \$937,000.

Additional Appropriation/Recommendation to Town Meeting

Crystal Lake Fire Dept Multi Purpose Rescue Pumper

Mr. Robert Levandoski of 48 Burbank Rd spoke against the purchase of the Rescue Pumper. He stated that as a firefighter and resident of the Crystal Lake portion of Ellington he feels that this purchase should not be approved until the Crystal Lake Fire Dept. and the Town can come to a mutual agreement as recommended by the Emergency Services Committee. He felt that the pumper would not benefit the Town of Ellington.

Selectman Charter stated that this is a contract issue and that the Committee recommends only. The Crystal Lake Fire Dept. is coming to the table to work out the issues. He felt that the contract was not a Board of Finance issue.

Chief Pippin told the Board that this is a multipurpose vehicle and the truck they are replacing is 26 years old. The Emergency Services Committee is meeting tomorrow night and will be addressing the issue that was brought up tonight. The truck they are asking to purchase is a demo for \$377,000. To purchase this same truck new would cost \$18-35,000 more. The current lease payment for the last truck will end and this one will begin. The current payment is \$74,210; the new payment will be \$85,291 at an interest rate of 4.69%.

Mr. Clements stated that he prefers purchasing the truck in this way because it doesn't change the finances. Mr. Pippin was asked who owns the Fire Equipment when the Town of Ellington purchases them. He stated that it will be owned by the Town of Ellington and not the fire district.

Mr. Ludwig, Crystal Lake Fire Dept, stated that this vehicle will be the department's workhorse by replacing two vehicles.

Mr. Varney asked about the DOT sticker, and Mr. Pippin stated that the sticker expires in January and they would have to have the items fixed before it could be renewed. Mr. Varney also asked him what other vendors he spoke with. Mr. Pippin stated that he spoke with Crimson and they also went to several equipment shows to look at trucks. Two Guys had the demo that satisfied their requirements. There is \$30,000 in extra equipment included in the \$377,000.

Mr. Cleary asked what the delivery time would be. The truck will arrive in 30 days with the first payment due in October 2010. Mr. Cleary was also concerned about the issue coming up separately from the Capital Improvements budget. Mr. Clements stated that he asked Mr. Pippin not to pursue this item in the budget and to bring it back in the fall. Mr. Pippin withdrew it at Mr. Clements' request. There will be money coming back into the general fund when they sell the other two pieces of equipment which is estimated to be \$38,000. Mr. Joyse did not feel it was fair that an item comes up separately and does not have to compete with others. Mr. Clements felt that the need is there, and it will affect the budget the least.

Mr. Varney would like to see it go to bid rather than from a single source. Mr. Pippin stated that the other vendors he spoke to were priced higher than this vehicle.

MOVED (PINTO) SECONDED (CLEARY) AND PASSED [AYE: CLEMENTS/CLEARY/PINTO/WEHR; NAY: JOYSE/VARNEY] TO FORWARD THE FIVE YEAR LEASE PURCHASE OF THE CRYSTAL LAKE FIRE DEPARTMENT MULTI PURCHASE PUMPER TO A TOWN MEETING AS APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN.

New Business

Discussion with Football Boosters/Program Costs and Funding Sources

Chairman Robert Clements made an opening statement. He explained the origin of this item. This item came to light through various newspaper articles. This meeting is not to tell the Board of Education how to spend their money or chastise them for their funding priorities. The Board of Finance had hoped the teachers would have agreed to defer their raises as all other bargaining units did to avoid this funding dilemma. Their refusal put the pressure on the BOE to scale back many of the programs they would have liked to fund. If the Board of Finance considers doing something for football, they would have to consider all others. We do not want to open that Pandora's Box. He stated that he had spoken with the Superintendent who forwarded him copies of a proposed plan to fund the unfunded sports that was proposed for the 2008-09 budget. It was a three year plan that due to budget constraints could not be completed. He questioned whether the Board of Finance wants to get involved in funding sports, and probably not as the Board of Education allocates their own priorities and needs. He stated that the Board of Finance is not trying to tell the BOE how to allocate their funds which they cannot legally do any way. They are just trying to get information.

Rich Gelsomino of the Football Boosters told the Board that they were established 12 years ago and the Football team was established 10 years ago. Last year the Board of Education established a 3 year restoration plan for unfunded sports. The first year the Football Team saw some funds but the Board of Education has not been able to fund the rest of the program due to budget constraints and economy. The football team realized they were in trouble. Fund raising has become more difficult over the last three years. The cost to operate the program is \$35,000. They are currently charging the players a fee of \$500 to play. He is worried that some players will not be on the team because of the out of pocket costs. He is confident there will continue to be a team but he's not sure what it will look like especially with a fee increase next year. The boosters are trying to keep the program a float. There are presently two organized booster clubs; the HS Athletic and Football. He stated that he felt the Boosters should be funding the extras such as uniforms, etc. The Town of Somers makes up 20% of the team. The Boosters have sent a letter to the Town of Somers Superintendent asking them to fund 20% of the cost.

The Town of Ellington is the only town with 100% private funding for the team. He stated that they will make it work, but to put a quality product on the field will require a lot of additional effort.

Mr. Wehr felt that the Board of Education could have funded some of these unfunded sports if the teachers union had been more cooperative. Instead they chose their salaries.

Current Year Budget Status

Mr. Joyse stated that he felt that periodically throughout the year, the Town Government and Board of Education should update the Board of Finance on how they are doing financially rather than at the end of the year or at budget time. He would like to see a dialogue kept open.

Superintendent Cullinan told the Board that there are outstanding issues pending with the State that are unknowns at this time. Even though the budget is three months old, the teacher's payroll didn't begin until September. An early estimate is that the teacher's payroll is \$28-30,000 in the hole; the health insurance is on target at this time. There is hope that the health insurance account will offset the payroll, but it will only take one or two teachers' spouses coming on board the insurance program to change that. There is no increase in the transportation budget for this year. It is too early to tell what the fuel budgets will be, however, last year they locked in with natural gas for their dual fuel burners. These dual burners saved the town money last year. The main issue is the unknown tuition for Ellington for the Magnet Schools, the Hartford Host Magnet schools, and the Hartford Choice schools. Also the excess cost reimbursement for Special Education will not be known until sometime between March and June. If the State cuts funds from this program, for every 10% funding cut there will be a \$35,000 shortfall for Ellington BOE.

Another issue is enrollment which is up. There are presently 206 kindergarten students. As far as the funding of the sports programs, if this had been a normal budget year, the Board of Education would have funded a portion of the unfunded programs as outlined on the three year plan. When the programs came to the Board, the understanding was that the BOE could not fund them and they would be entirely funded privately. If the football program had waited until the school system could fund it, it would not have the 10 year track record it has now. They have all done a good job with fundraising.

Some items that were eliminated this year are a speech and language teacher, part of a school psychologist, 1.6 of a physical education teacher, an art teacher, enrichment program at Windermere, two custodians, 2 paraprofessionals, and several grants were eliminated or reduced. The Superintendent estimates that to get back to last year would cost the Board of Education approximately \$708,000.

Chairman Clements thanked the Superintendent and stated that most people do not realized what the Board of Education is up against when it comes to State funding.

Dale Roberson stated that he felt that the teachers do in fact put students first and work for the benefit of the students. They gave up two furlough days and he feels Ellington teachers are outstanding.

Mr. Wehr stated that it is not the teachers he has a problem with but the Teachers Unions.

Michael Stupinski, First Selectman, stated that the government budget is doing alright now and he is thankful that he does not have the State unknowns to deal with.

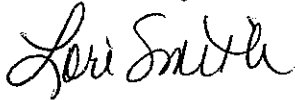
Other New Business

Jeff Deland of the Little League asked to speak to the Board of Finance. They have been fundraising and would like to install irrigation at Brookside Park for the three little league fields. They will cover 100% of the entire system installation and the first three years of the annual maintenance and the water bill. He is looking for support from the Board of Finance. Chairman Clements told him that if he is not requesting any additional funds, he only needs to go to the Board of Selectmen. The First Selectmen, Mr. Deland and the Public Works Director will meet before the Oct 19 Selectmen's meeting. There is also the option to increase the size of the main tap to include the softball field and soccer fields if the town is agreeable.

Adjournment

MOVED (CLEARY) SECONDED (WEHR) AND PASSED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:30 PM.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lori Smith".

Lori Smith, Recording Clerk